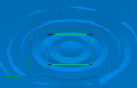


WHAT NCSALL HAS LEARNED

John Comings

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy
Harvard Graduate School of Education



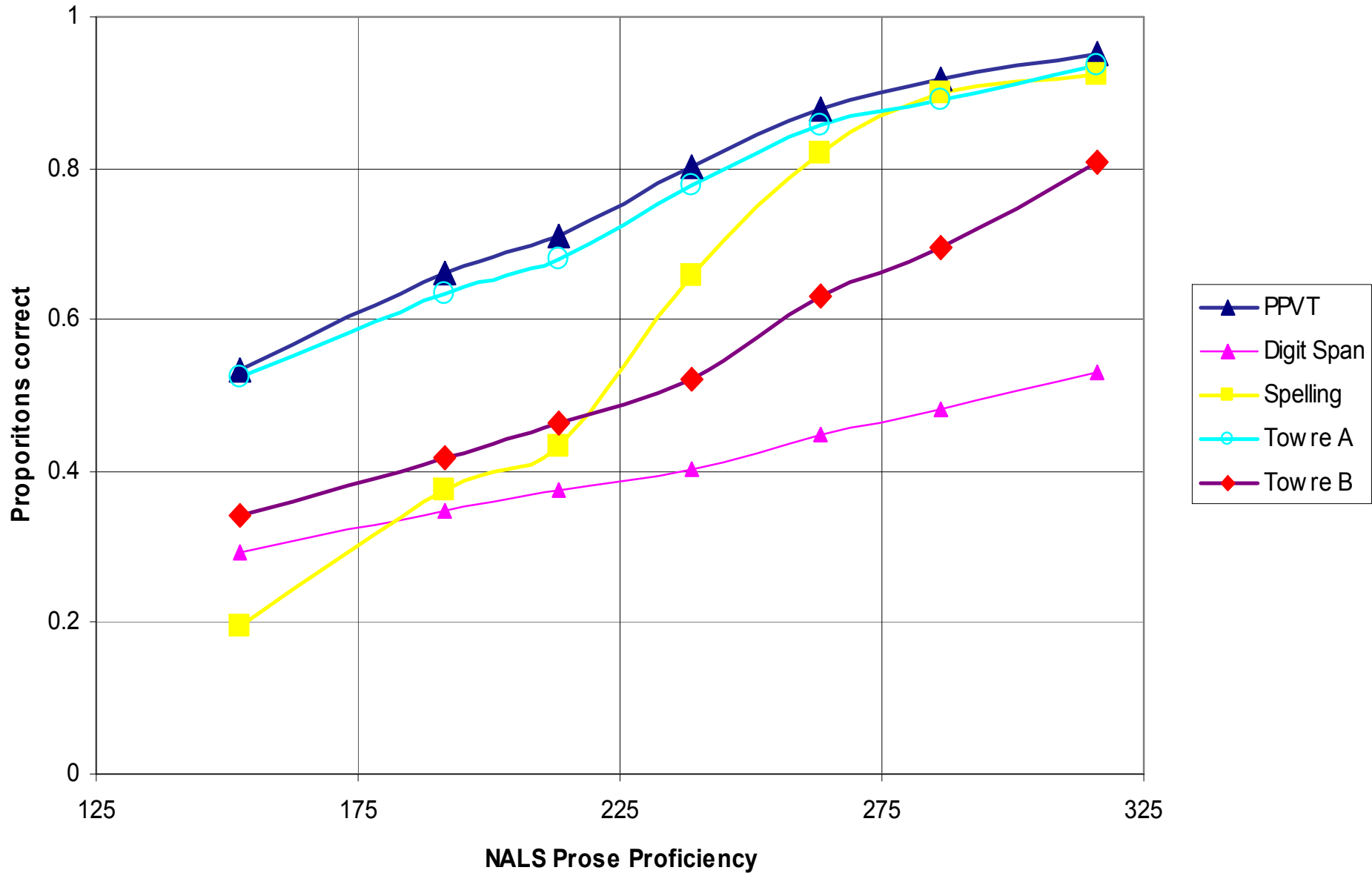
Percent of Adults (16+) by Prose NALS/NAAL Level and Score Range

- Level 1: 22% (0-225) 25%
- Below Basic: 16% (0-209)

- Level 2: 24% (226-275) 22%
- Basic: 28% (210-264)

- Level 3+: 54% (276-500) 53%
- Int/Prof: 56% (265-500)

Proportions Correct by NALS Prose Proficiency

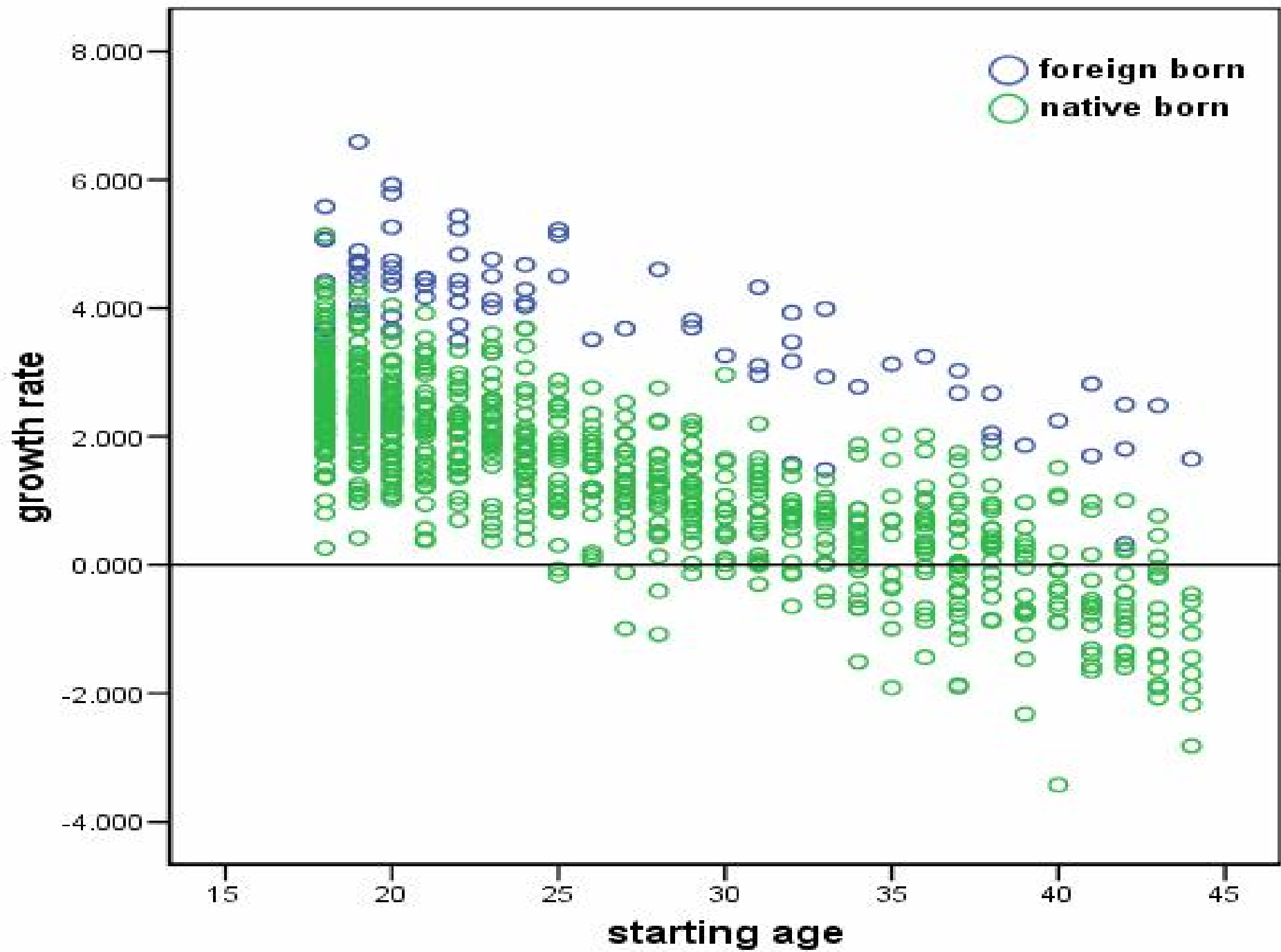


Components Assessments

- PPVT: Receptive Vocabulary
- TOWER A: Real word reading accuracy and speed (word reading efficiency)
- TOWER B: Pseudo word reading accuracy and speed (decoding efficiency)
- Spelling
- Digit Span: Short term auditory memory

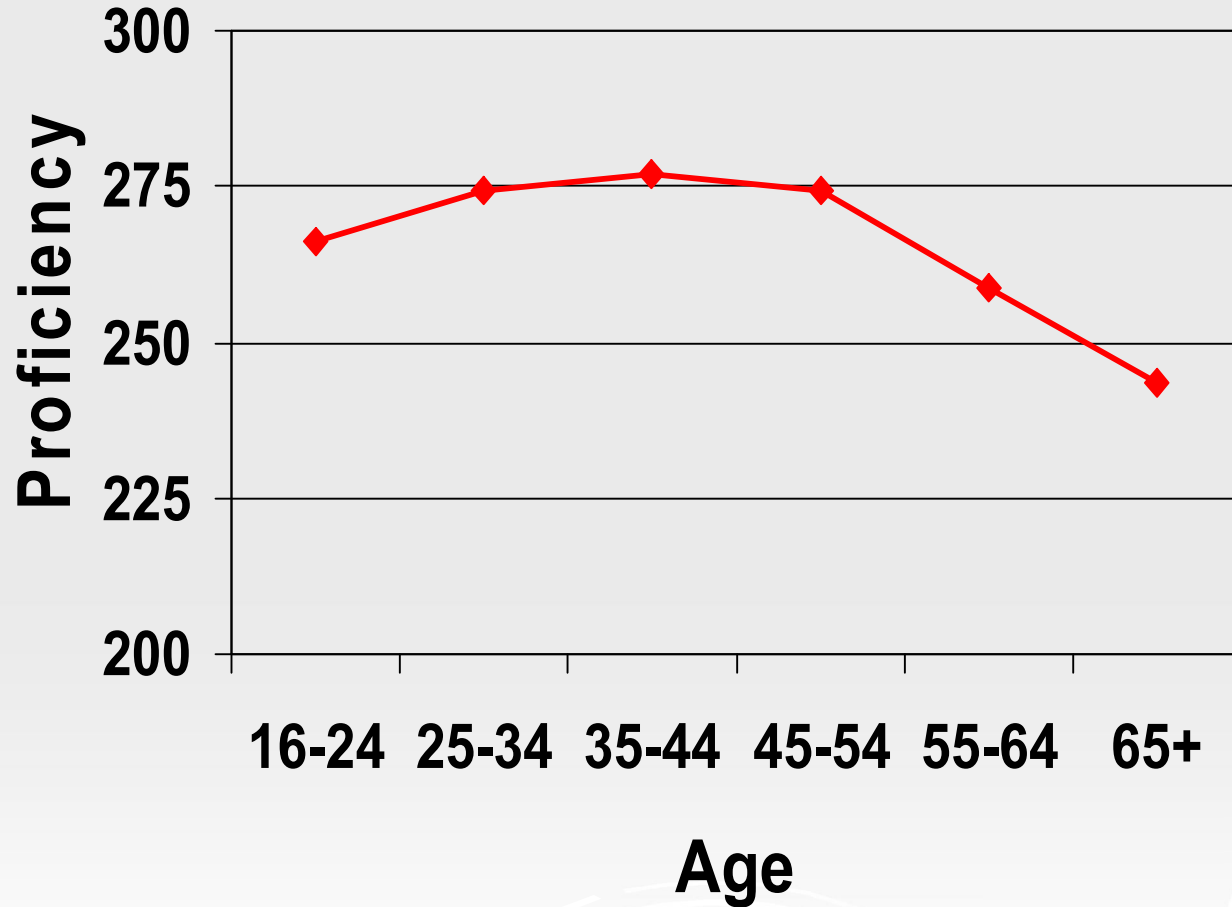
Literacy is...

- **Component skills** (alphabeticity, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and...
- **Practices** in which adults employ all of the component skills to accomplish tasks (enjoyment, work, health, religion, politics, academic learning, etc.)



NALS Document Literacy by Age

(1992 national data corrected for education & disabilities)

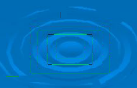


Reading Practices Scale

How often do you read fiction?

How often do you read non-fiction?

How often do you write notes, letters, or email?

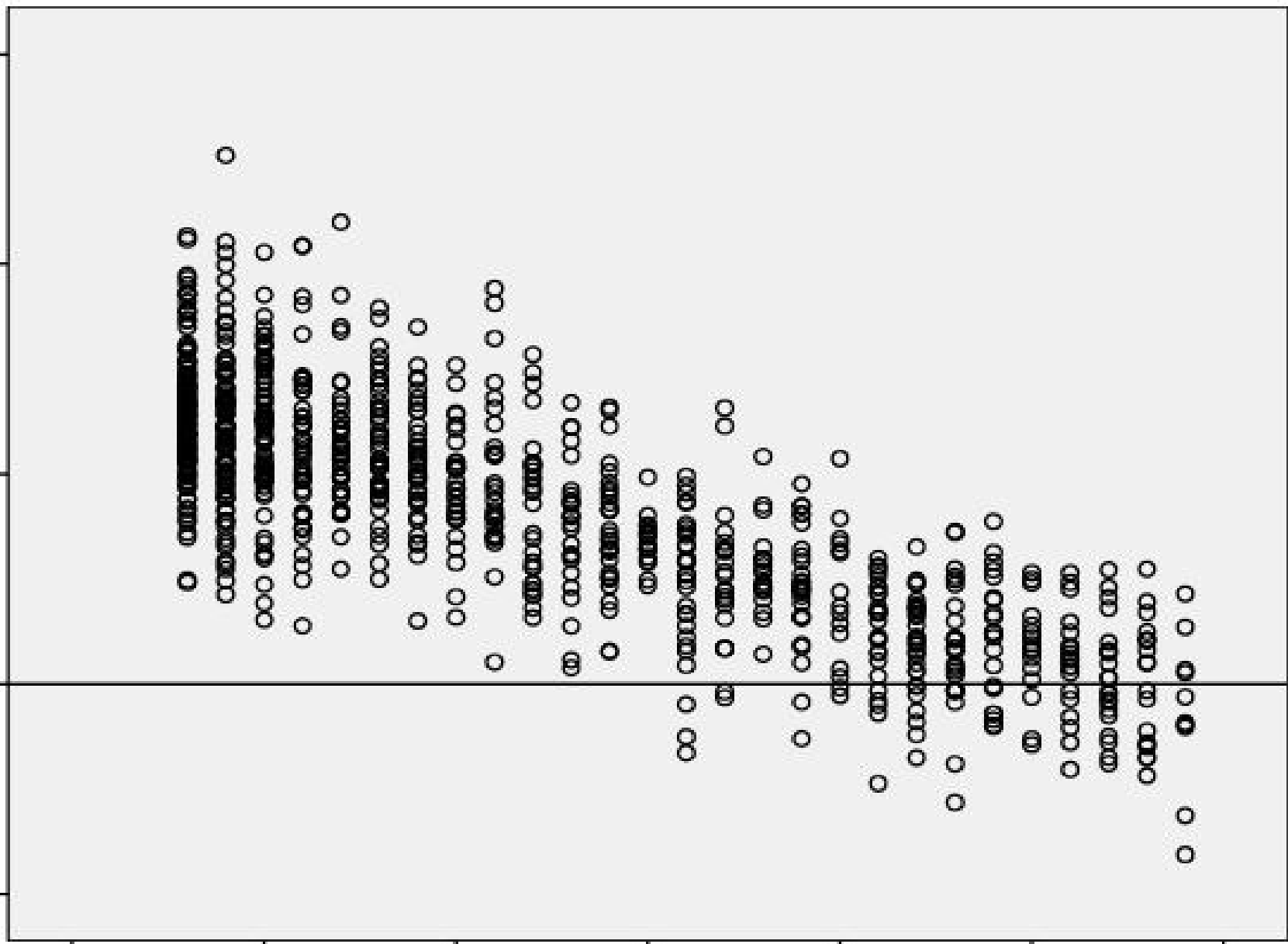


READ rate of change

0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
-0.1

15 20 25 30 35 40 45

starting age



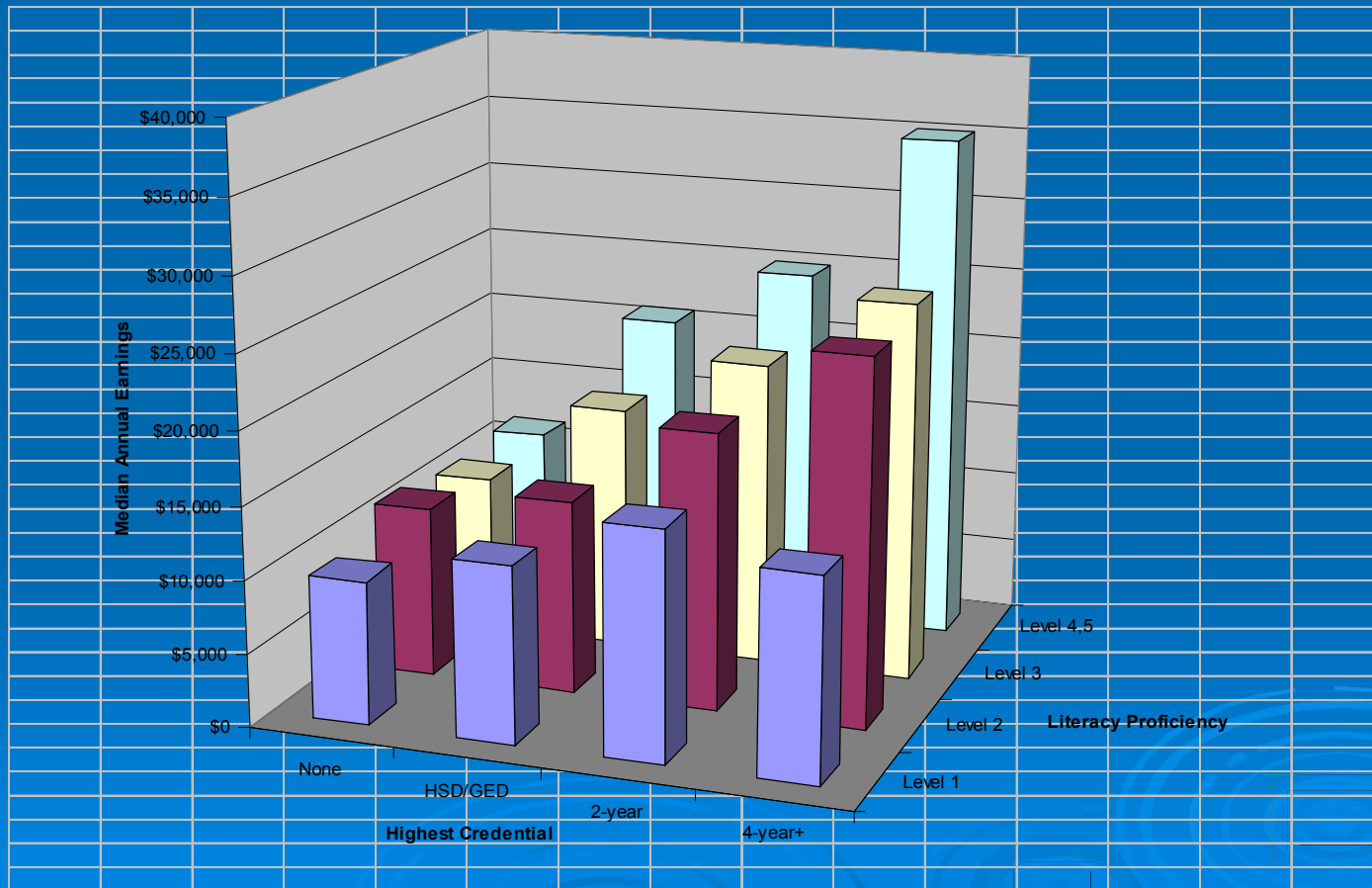
Theory of Change

- Program participation improves component skills.
- Self-study and Program Participation increase literacy practices and those literacy practices lead to improved literacy skills.
- Engagement in academic learning leads to improvements in literacy skills.
- Life circumstances may lead to changes in practices that lead to improved literacy skills.

Findings from GED Study

- 10% To 20% higher income for low skilled adults
- Increase may not occur for four years
- Score predicts income
- Two years postsecondary education or training needed to come out of poverty, but...
- ...only 12% of GED holders go on to postsecondary, and only a small group is successful.

Income by NALS Level and Education



Goal of the Adult Literacy System

- Language, literacy and math skills at NALS Level 3 or NAAL Intermediate Level,
- GED or its equivalent, and
- Transition into postsecondary education or its equivalent in vocational training.

National Estimate of Adults (18-64) Facing Three Challenges

	Language Challenge	Credential Challenge	Literacy and Numeracy Challenge	Total
Number of U.S. Adults (18-64)	6,466,383	23,247,930	34,288,383	64,002,697
Percent of Total U.S. Adults (18-64)	4.7%	17.0%	20.1%	41.8%

Groups by Goal and Need

1. ESOL students who are literate in their native language and test at or below SPL4 on the BEST.
2. ESOL students who are literate in their native language and test at or above SPL5.
3. GED students whose literacy skills are at or above the 8th grade level as measured by a test such as the TABE or CASAS.
4. ABE students whose literacy skills are between the 6th and 8th grade level.
5. ABE students with literacy skills below the 6th grade level.
6. ESOL students who are not literate in their native language.

Globalization

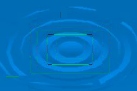
- Globalization is changing our economy, our cultures, and our political institutions.
- To benefit from these changes, to lessen their negative impact, and to understand these changes, adults need to develop their abilities in three areas:
 - Skills and Knowledge
 - Critical Thinking
 - Cognitive Development

Skills and Knowledge


- **What:** Language, literacy, and numeracy
- **Why:** The adult roles of worker, parent, and citizen now demand higher levels of skills and knowledge
- **How:** Automating component skills and applying them to authentic practices

Teaching Skills and Knowledge

- Direct teaching of component skills
- Engaging in authentic practices that challenge the learner

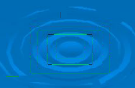


Critical Thinking

- What: The ability to analyze situations and strategize how to deal with them
 - Why: To shape the impact of globalization on our lives
 - How: Dialogue and Praxis
- 

Teaching Critical Thinking

- Description What do you see?
- Evaluation Is this a problem?
- Analysis Why do you say it is a problem?
- Causation Why does this problem exist?
- Personalize Is this a problem for you?
- Action What could we do about this?



Cognitive Development

- What: Three ways of understanding the world

Instrumental
Socializing
Self-authoring

- Why: Our world is more complex
- How: Working together and understanding each other's way of understanding the world

Teaching Cognitive Development

- Designing learning activities in which groups of adult students work together to learn
- Helping students describe to each other their way of understanding

Building all Thee Abilities

- The goal of adult educators should be to combine the learning of all three abilities while learning academic, vocational, or life content
- Then adults can bring their abilities to the changing nature of their roles as workers, parents, and citizens

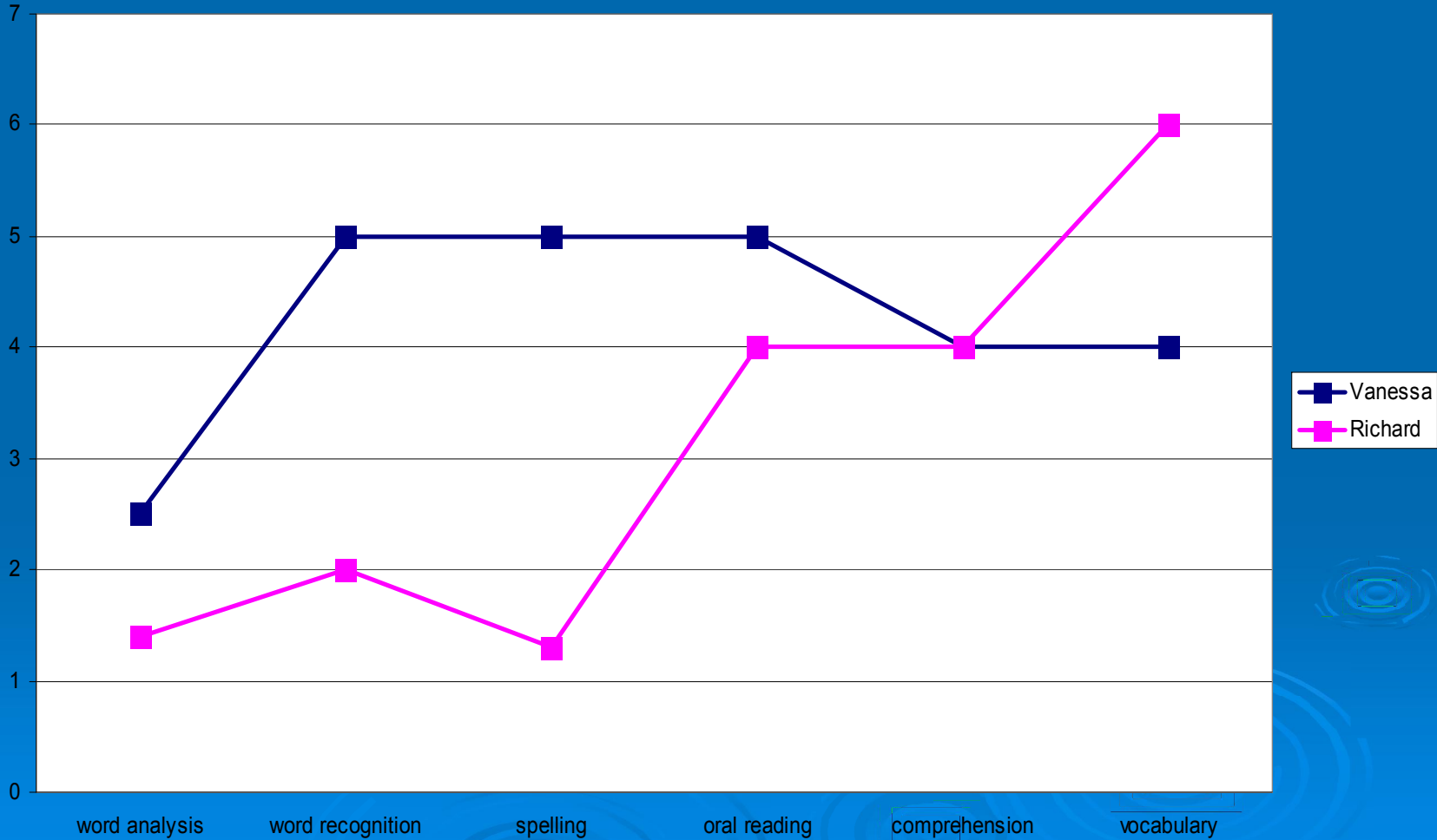
Differences between K-12 and Adult Education

- Research and practices from K-12 can be applied to adult education but must be adapted based on four differences between the two systems.

Student Profiles Difference

Adults who have the same grade level score on a comprehension test might have very different sets of skills, knowledge and abilities, while most children who are in the same grade and have the same test score have similar sets of skills, knowledge and abilities.

Two learners with GE 4 comprehension... but *very* different reading profiles



Reading Profiles

- Advanced (NALS high 2- low 3) need:
 - A GED and transition to post-secondary education or training
- Intermediate (NALS 2) need:
 - Vocabulary and background knowledge,
 - Fluency and word recognition, or
 - Both
- Beginning Readers (NALS 1) need:
 - structured teaching (O-G, Wilson, Barton) and assistive technology

Other Factors

- Immigrants need oral language development.
- Those under 30 improve their reading as measured by a test, with achieving a GED as a predictor.
- Those over 30 expand their reading practices, with program participation as a predictor.

The Content Difference

Authentic (as opposed to academic) content in the adult education system provides the motivation to learn and the opportunity to practice skills that the transition from one grade to another provides in the child schooling system.

Content...

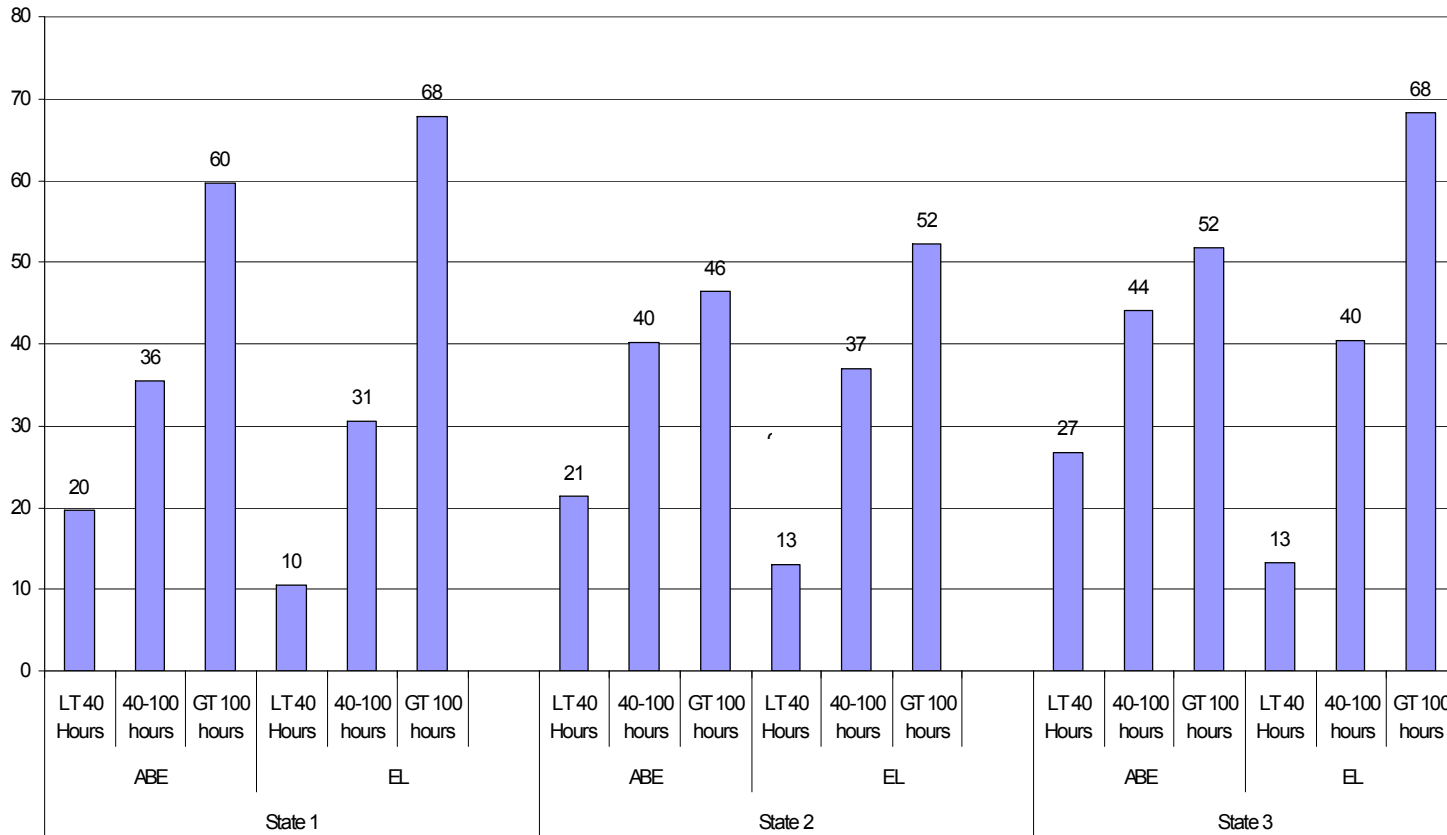
- Use of authentic content in the classroom leads to more reading and reading of new kinds of texts outside the classroom.
- Health, Career, Children

The Persistence Difference

Support to persistence in the adult education system serves the purpose that compulsory attendance serves in child schooling.

- 100 hours for a 1 GLE increase
- 75 percent chance of making a 1+ GLE increase at 150 hours
- .40 GLE increase after 54 hours

Exhibit 42 Level Gain or GED by Program and Attendance



Persistence Pathways

- Long-term: motivation and low barriers
- Mandatory: judicial or welfare agency mandates motivation and lowers barriers
- Short-term: motivation and low barriers to accomplish specific goal
- Try-out: low motivation and/or high barriers
- Intermittent: motivation and barriers

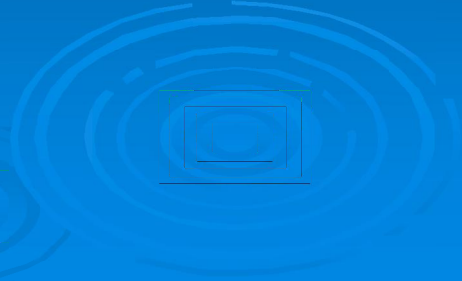
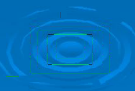
Persistence Interventions

- Add a set of supports to existing programs
- Redefine participation



Persistence Supports

- Management of forces
 - human and life context
- Building self-efficacy
 - mastery, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and opportunities to address emotional states
- Establishment of clear goals
- Progress toward reaching goals



Program Improvements

- When programs improved services, months of engagement did not increase but hours of participation did.
 - Caused by increase in computer use in the first six months of participation.

Engagement

- Program Involvement: Interest and commitment
- Learning Focus: Sustained and intentional focus on the task
- Independent Effort: Proactive responsibility for learning

Engagement...

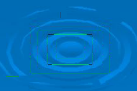
- Proactive (33.9%) High Program Involvement + High Independent Effort
- Inattentive (17.4%) Very Low Learning Focus
- Uncommitted (24.3%) Very Low Program Involvement
- Teacher Dependent (24.3%) Low Independent Effort

Engagement ...

- Independent Effort was strongest predictor of reading gain.
- Practitioners and students should engage in a dialogue that supports independent effort.

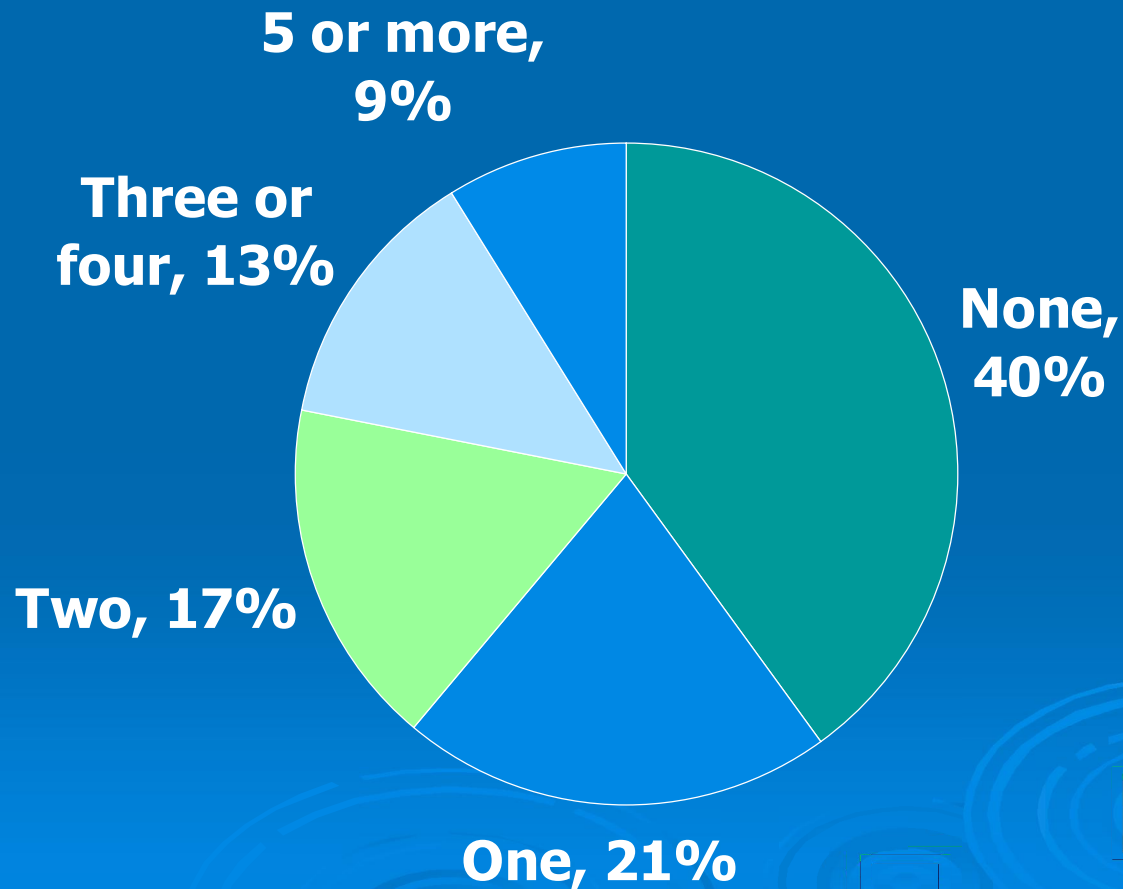
The Participation Difference

The provision of a range of services could provide the opportunity for continuous learning in adult education programs that the child schooling system provides through specific places and set schedules.



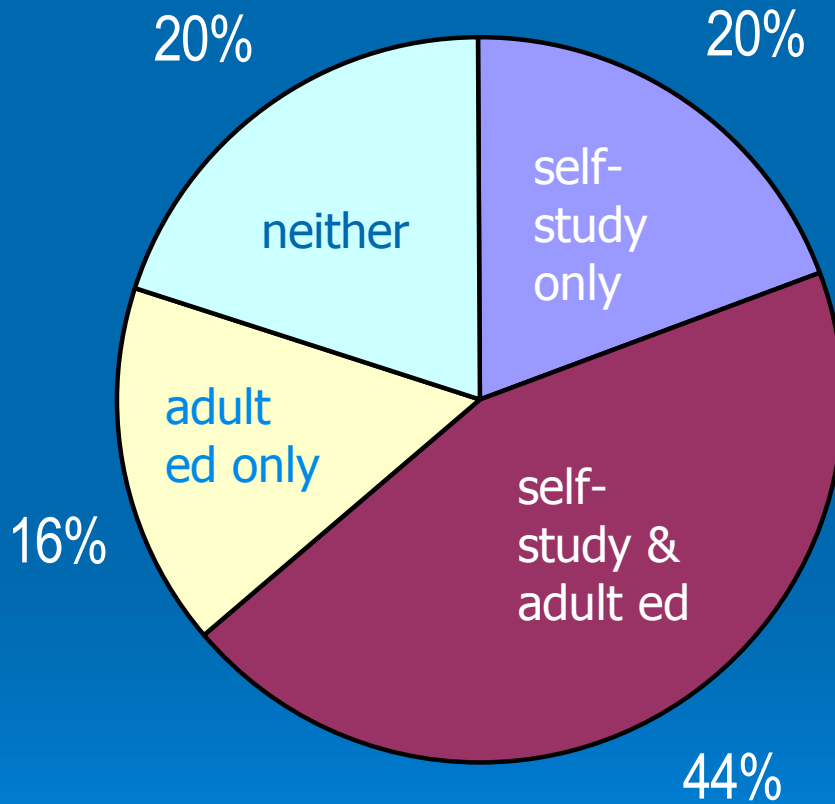
Periods of Participation in Basic Skills Programs Since Leaving School

(1000 high school dropouts 18-45 in Portland OR)



Self-Study and Participation

(1000 high school dropouts 18-45 in Portland OR)

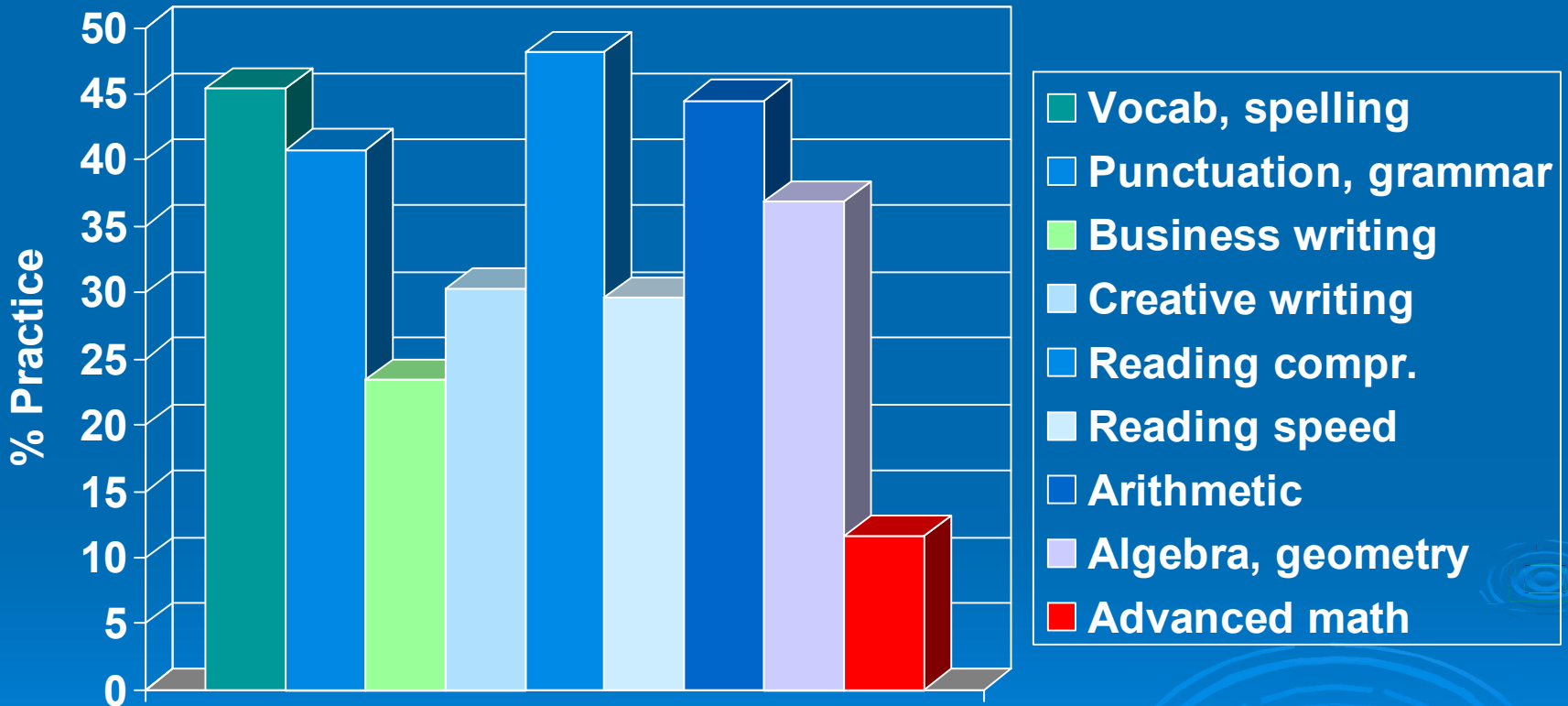


64% have self-studied

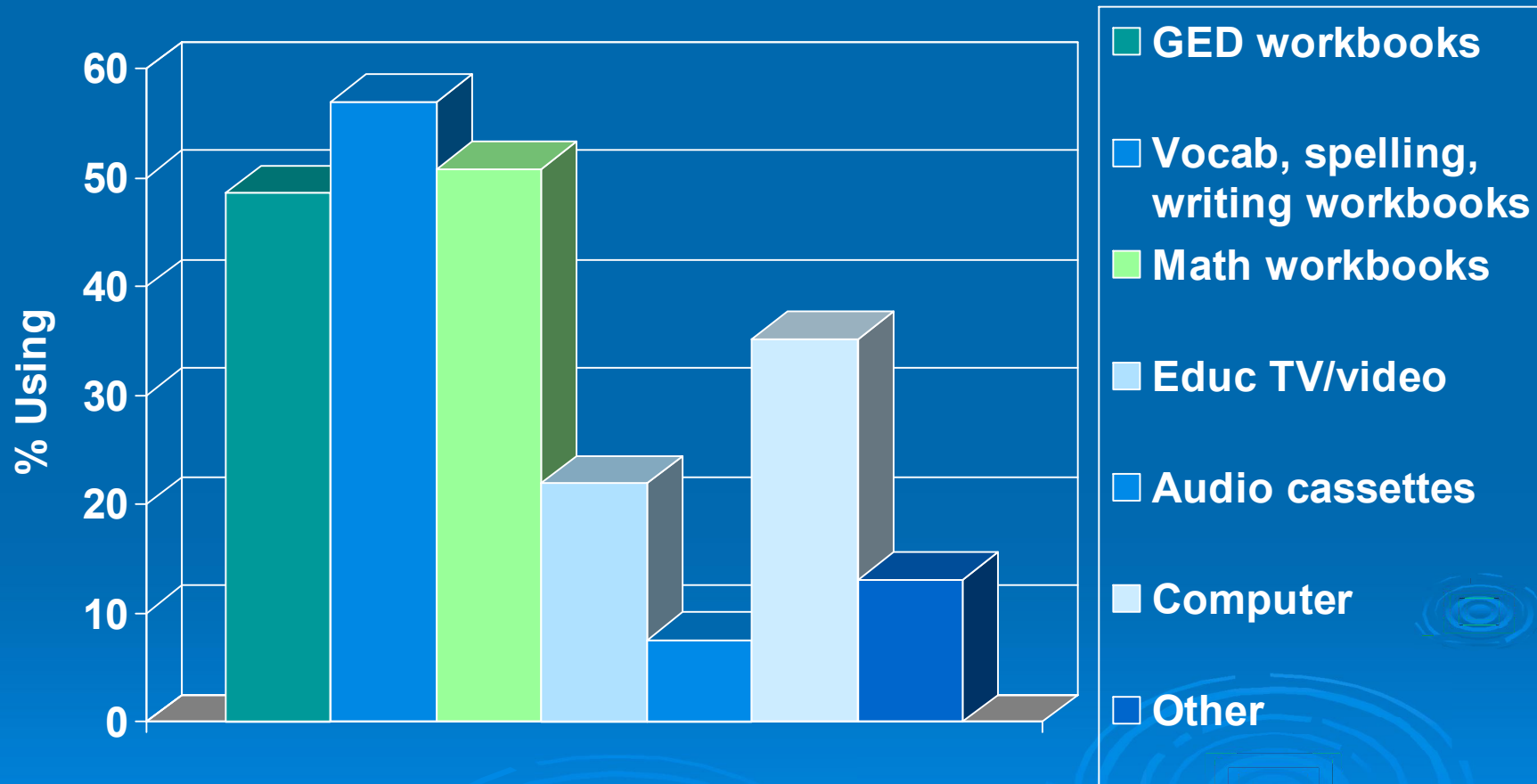
60% have taken adult ed

(between leaving school and Wave 4)

Self-Study: Skills Practiced

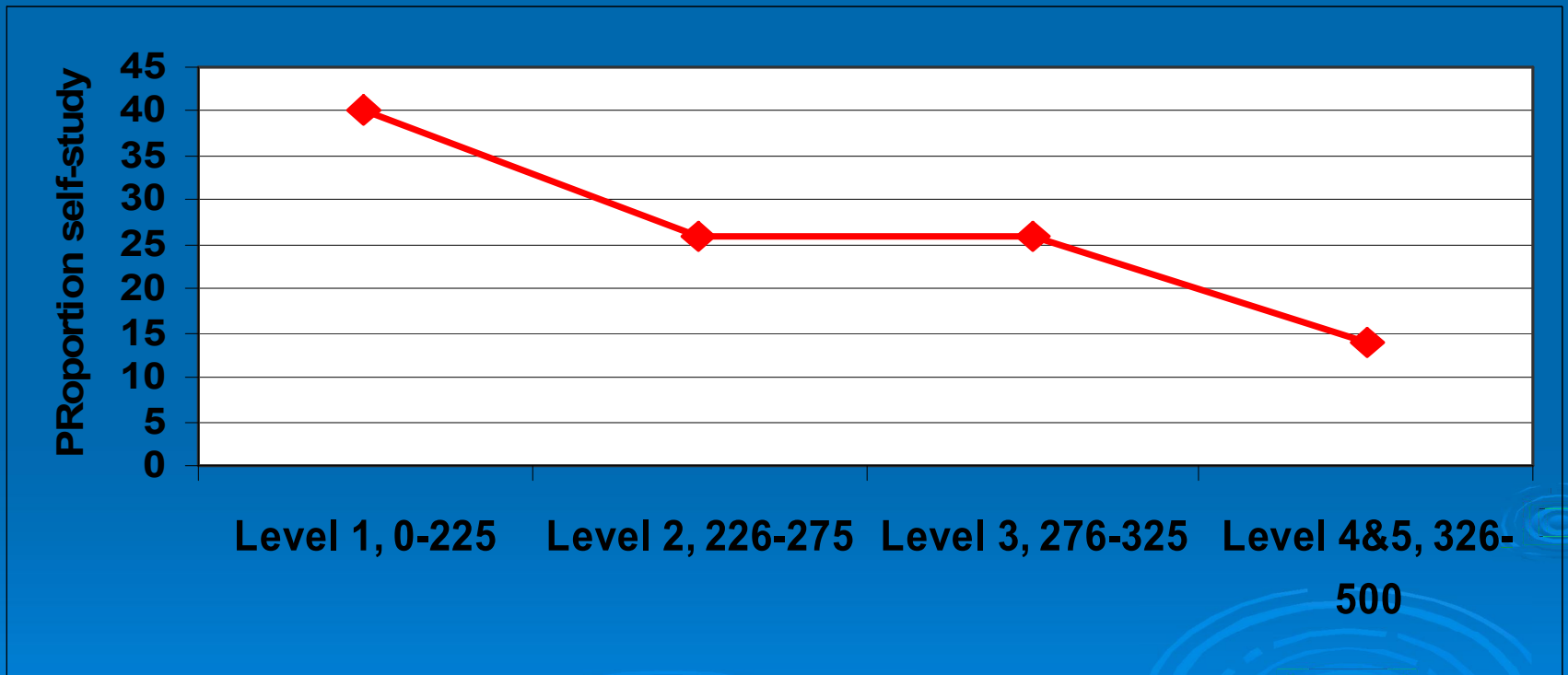


Self-Study: Materials Used



Self-Study by Literacy Proficiency

(1000 high school dropouts 18-45 in Portland OR)



Entering a Program

- Recruitment
- Intake
- Orientation
- Waitlist Management
 - Help students establish clear goals
 - Assessing student instructional and support needs
 - Build individual plans for instruction and support services
 - Establish a way to leave and reenter the program
 - Begin building Independent effort

Participating in a Program

- Classroom management
- Instructional Process
- Supports to Persistence
 - Multiple modes of learning
 - Connected episodes of learning
 - Collaboration with agencies that provide support and that raise barriers
 - A counselor who focuses on goals, plans, self-efficacy, and human support
 - A focus on building independent effort
 - A focus on component skills and authentic practices

Reengagement

- Monitoring Student Departure
- Addressing Student Departure
- Supporting Transitions
 - A staff responsibility to know when students have dropped out and help them reengage
 - Collaboration with postsecondary institutions to build a bridge of support

Economic Development and Social Inclusion

“And I believe that those programs which make life better for some of our people will make life better for all of our people. A rising tide lifts all the boats.”

President John F. Kennedy
Pueblo, Colorado
August 17, 1962

NCSALL Research

www.ncsall.net

